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Project Safe Neighborhoods Gives Domestic Violence a Face

Portland, Maine: In recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced yesterday during a press conference that Maine's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN Maine) anti-gun violence initiative has launched an unprecedented series of public service announcements to combat domestic-related gun violence.

Announcements focused on bystanders of domestic violence will begin to air this week throughout Maine as part of the PSN Maine domestic-related gun violence ad campaign. The announcements feature Maine citizens who, in their own words, describe the impact that domestic violence has had on their lives. "These powerful announcements are a call to action for Maine citizens to help put a stop to gun violence in their communities and homes," Silsby said. "If you have a daughter, a sister, a coworker, a neighbor, or a friend who you believe is being abused - be a bridge - make a call - save a life."

"When an abuser kills, he rocks the foundation of family and community and leaves a trail of heartbreak that cannot be healed," said Attorney General Steve Rowe who attended the press conference. He said the PSAs are aimed at friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors of victims. "Our message is simple: If you know someone who might be experiencing abuse, call 1-866-834-HELP and find out what resources are available to victims of abuse in your

area. Talk with the person privately, offer her support and provide her with information on resources.”

The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) provides a hotline for callers looking for advice on how to help a loved one in danger. Domestic violence shelters and other MCEDV member projects receive a hotline call every 10 minutes; however, according to a 2005 study by Silsby’s office, the number of threats made with a firearm against an intimate partner or family member far exceeds the number of reported violent crimes committed with a firearm in Maine each year.

According to the Maine Department of Public Safety, domestic violence assaults increased 1.7% from 2005 to 2006 . Of the 21 homicides in Maine in 2006, 38% were domestic-related and 57% were committed with a firearm.

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